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The President nominated, as a Committee to examine the Treasurer's accounts, Messrs. Lawrence, Russell, and F. E. Parker.

The President also appointed, with the consent of the Society, as a Committee to nominate officers for the ensuing year, Messrs. Washburn, S. Lincoln, and Livermore.

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ANNUAL MEETING, APRIL 14, 1864.

The Society held its annual meeting this day, Thursday, April 14, at eleven o'clock, A.M.; the President, Hon. ROBERT C. WINTHROP, in the chair.

Donations were announced from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts; the State of Rhode Island; the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec; the New-England Loyal Publication Society; the Bishop Seabury Mission; the Trustees of Bowdoin College; the Young Men's Association of Cincinnati; the Vestry of Christ's Church, Longwood; Hon. Ira M. Barton; Mr. W. L. Bradley; Henry B. Dawson, Esq.; Rev. B. F. De Costa; Thomas Gaffield, Esq.; Thomas S. Kirkbride, M.D.; Henry T. Parker, Esq.; Benjamin S. Shaw, M.D.; Rev. Edwin M. Stone; Rev. Frederic A. Whitney; William Winthrop, Esq.; and from Messrs. Lamson, Loring, Robbins (C.), Webb, and Winthrop, of the Society.

The President announced the death of Hon. Robert Hallowell Gardiner in the following terms:—

It is proper that we should make mention to-day that the Hon. Robert Hallowell Gardiner, whose name has been on the roll of our Honorary Members for five years past, died at his residence at Gardiner, Me., on the 22d of March last. He was a graduate of Harvard University, of the class of 1801; and has been associated with not a few of the most valued institutions — literary, charitable, and religious — in New England. He was for many years connected with the government of Bowdoin College; and for a still longer period, I believe, President of the Historical Society of Maine. He lived a long and useful life, exercising a liberal hospitality on his noble estate, in which not a few of us have shared; and died at the age of eighty-two years, widely esteemed and respected.

The President presented from M. Jules E. Souhard, the French consul at Boston, several discourses of M. Rouher, Minister of State, in the sittings of the Senate and of the Corps Législatif of France.

Erastus B. Bigelow, Esq., of Boston, and William C. Endicott, Esq., of Salem, were elected Resident Members.

Mr. ELLIS, from the Committee to whom was referred the collection of "broadsides" presented at the last meeting, reported that they had found the collection to be very valuable; that the papers should be arranged in chronological order, and carefully preserved in a suitable volume; and that the catalogue of Harvard College, of the year 1700, might with propriety, by the consent of the donor, Mr. Winthrop, be presented to

the library of that institution, provided a copy were made to be preserved in the archives of the Society. A wish was also expressed by the Committee, that Mr. Sibley, the Librarian of Harvard College, would prepare a history of the triennial catalogues of that institution, for publication in the Proceedings of our Society.

The Report was accepted, and the catalogue given accordingly to Harvard College.

The Chairman of the Standing Committee, the Librarian, and the Treasurer, produced their Annual Reports. In the absence of the Cabinet-keeper (Dr. Green) at the seat of war, the Report on the Cabinet, as prepared by the Assistant Librarian, was presented.

These Reports were all accepted, and referred to the Committee on the Publication of the Proceedings. They here follow: —

*Annual Report of the Standing Committee.*

The Standing Committee of the Massachusetts Historical Society would hereby respectfully offer their Report of the transactions of the Society during the last year, and of its present condition.

Though there has been but little to mark the history of the Society the last year, it has quietly pursued its duties with satisfactory success. It has, with a single exception, held its regular meetings during the year, at several of which interesting communications have been made.

[The remarks relating to the condition of the library, being substantially the same as given in the Librarian's Report, are here omitted.]

The Society has issued no publications the present year; but the Committee are happy to inform them that a volume of

Collections is in a good state of forwardness, and a volume of Proceedings is partly completed.

Its individual members, however, have not been inactive. Works have been produced by them which have been a valuable and permanent addition to the historic literature of the country. In the Memoir of their late associate, Mr. Prescott, by another member of this Society, nothing is wanting in the completeness of the notice of that remarkable man, in the style of its execution, or the spirit which pervades it. Nor should the Society fail to recognize the just tribute so appropriately paid to the founder of this Commonwealth by one who continues to honor the name; nor is it a matter of regret that it was reserved for so long a time, in view of the fidelity with which this contribution has been made to the history of Massachusetts. From another of its members, whose distinguished services in the camp and field have been the subject of frequent eulogium, they may expect a work of great interest and value upon the character and history of many important events of the war, of which he has been an immediate observer in his place as chaplain of one of the Massachusetts volunteer regiments.

In connection with the current events of the Rebellion in which the country is involved, the Committee would recall the memorial of the bloody field of Gettysburg, commemorated so eloquently in another form by one of the distinguished members of this Society, which they received through the kindness and considerate regard of Mr. M'Conaughy, and forwarded through their friends of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, in the section of a tree which stood upon that field, and bears the marks of more than a hundred Minie balls received during the battle, bearing testimony to the fierceness of the struggle.

The state of the finances of the Society, upon which so much of its working efficiency depends, is shown by the Report of its careful and attentive Treasurer. It gives honor-

able evidence of the liberality of its patrons on every occasion when its necessities have seemed to be the most pressing.

The Society have to regret the loss of the valuable services of their Librarian, who declines a re-election; and are pained to learn that the ill health of their Corresponding Secretary has obliged him to give up the duties of that place.

The number of its members at the commencement of the year just closed were as follow: Ninety-six Resident, and one hundred and twelve Corresponding and Honorary Members. Of Resident Members, four have died, and five have been elected; making the present number ninety-seven. Of the Corresponding and Honorary Members, five have died, and six have been added; making, in the whole, one hundred and thirteen Corresponding and Honorary Members.

These changes serve to remind the Society that death has been busy within the circle of their association during the past year; though the number whose decease has been noticed from time to time, as they occurred, is smaller than during some former years. Appropriate references have been made to the character and services of the deceased by the President and other members of the Society; and it is to be hoped that a more permanent tribute to them may find a place in the coming volume of the Proceedings of the Society.

The Committee would, in closing, congratulate the Society upon its present prosperous condition. With its funds, its library, and its catalogue of members, it may be confidently hoped that its character amongst kindred associations may be sustained, and its active usefulness still more widely extended.

For the Committee.

EMORY WASHBURN, *Chairman.*

*Annual Report of the Treasurer.*

The Treasurer of the Massachusetts Historical Society presents the following statement of its final condition:—

## GENERAL ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDING APRIL, 1864.

## DEBITS.

John Appleton . . . . .	\$1,037.47
George Arnold . . . . .	649.99
Insurance . . . . .	187.50
Boston Taxes . . . . .	230.00
Sundries . . . . .	334.93
Massachusetts Historical Trust-Fund . . . . .	120.00
Appleton Fund . . . . .	732.18
Printing . . . . .	758.58
Coal . . . . .	94.50
Certificate of \$1,000 in 5-20 Loan . . . . .	1,018.41
Binding . . . . .	208.96
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	<u>\$5,372.52</u>

## CREDITS.

Balance of Account of 1863 . . . . .	\$270.21
Rent of Suffolk Savings Institution . . . . .	2,200.00
Assessments . . . . .	362.00
Admission Fees . . . . .	40.00
Sales of Society's Publications . . . . .	796.01
Tax of Suffolk Savings Bank . . . . .	230.00
Hon. William Minot, Executor of Will of Mary P. Townsend . . . . .	1,000.00
Balance due the Treasurer . . . . .	474.30
	<hr/>
	<u>\$5,372.52</u>

## THE APPLETON FUND.

This fund consisted of ten thousand dollars, presented to the Society, Nov. 18, 1854, by the executors of the will of the late Samuel Appleton, on the condition that its income be applied to the purchase, preservation, and publication of historical material. It was received from the executors in ten shares of manufacturing stocks. These stocks were sold in February and March; and the net proceeds, amounting to twelve thousand two hundred and three dollars, were invested in the real estate of the Society, according to the Declaration

of Trust on file, and recorded in the Register of Deed's office, book 827, p. 63. Volumes three, four, five, and six of the fourth series of the Society's Collections were printed from the income of this fund, and a portion of the Society's Proceedings, and the strictly historical portion of the volume of the Proceedings printed for 1862-63.

*Account ending April, 1864.*

DEBITS.

John Wilson & Son, printing portion of volume of Proceedings, 1862-63 . . . . .	\$504.12
Andrew Holland, Printing . . . . .	25.00
John Appleton, services . . . . .	200.00
W. M. Miller . . . . .	7.50
Balance in the Treasurer's hands . . . . .	1,347.07
	<u>\$2,083.69</u>

CREDITS.

Balance of Account of 1863 . . . . .	\$1,351.51
One Year's Interest on the Investment in Society's Building . . . . .	732.18
	<u>\$2,083.69</u>

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL TRUST-FUND.

This fund consists of two thousand dollars, presented to the Society, Oct. 15, 1855, by Hon. David Sears; the annual income of which may be expended in certain specified objects, as the Society may by special vote direct. It is invested in the real estate of the Society.

*Account to April, 1864.*

DEBITS.

Balance in the Treasurer's hands . . . . .	\$510.57
	<u>\$510.57</u>

CREDITS.

Balance of Account of 1863 . . . . .	\$390.57
Income to March 1, 1864 . . . . .	120.00
	<u>\$510.57</u>



## THE DOWSE FUND.

This fund, of ten thousand dollars, was presented to the Society, April, 1857, by the executors of the will of the late Thomas Dowse; and it was invested in a note signed by Edward Hyde and O. W. Watris, secured by mortgage on real estate. This note was paid on the 7th of April, 1863; and the whole fund was then invested in the real estate of the Society. The income of this fund is included in the rent received from the Suffolk Savings Bank; and the expenditure is included in salaries paid to Messrs. Appleton and Arnold, who are employed in the care of the Dowse Library.

## PROPERTY OF THE SOCIETY.

*The Estate on Tremont Street.* — The Society purchased, March 6, 1833, of the Provident Savings Institution, the second story and one-half of the attic story of this building for \$6,500; and on the 13th of March, 1856, the remainder of the interest of this institution, for \$35,000. A portion of this was paid by subscription; and, for the remainder, the Society mortgaged the whole estate, to the Suffolk Savings Bank for Seamen and Others, for \$27,500. This mortgage was discharged on the 7th of April, 1863. The payments of the note have been as follows: Two thousand dollars from the legacy of Miss Mary P. Townsend; sixteen hundred dollars from the legacy of the late Nathaniel I. Bowditch; five hundred dollars from the Historical Trust-Fund; twelve thousand two hundred and three dollars from the net proceeds of the sale of stocks of the Appleton Fund; ten thousand dollars from the note of Hyde and Watris, constituting the Dowse Fund; and the balance, eleven hundred and ninety-seven dollars, from a donation by the late Hon. William Sturgis to enable the Society to discharge the mortgage. The lower floor is rented to the Suffolk Savings Institution for fifteen years from March 1, 1856, at an annual rent of \$2,200.

*The Library, Paintings, and Cabinet.* — The general library consists of about nine thousand bound volumes and fifteen thousand pamphlets.

*The Society's Publications.* — These consist of the thirty-six volumes of the Collections, four volumes of Proceedings, and two volumes of the Catalogue, — nearly eight thousand volumes, which are for sale.

*The Appleton Fund*, of ten thousand dollars; *The Massachusetts Historical Trust-Fund*, of two thousand dollars; *The Dowse Fund*, of ten thousand dollars, — all invested in the real estate of the Society, as explained in this Report.

*The Dowse Library.* — This library was presented to the Society by the late Thomas Dowse, and consists of about five thousand volumes.

*The Copyright of the "Life of John Quincy Adams."* — This was presented to the Society by Hon. Josiah Quincy. A new edition is on sale by Crosby and Nichols.

*Stock.* — A certificate of one thousand dollars in the 5-20 United-States loan.

#### THE INCOME.

The income of the Society consists of an annual assessment, on each Resident Member, of seven dollars, or, instead, the payment of sixty dollars; the admission-fee, of ten dollars, of new members; the rent of the lower floor of the Society's building; the sales of the publications of the Society; the sales of the "Life of John Quincy Adams;" and the interest on one thousand dollars of United-States stock.

RICHARD FROTHINGHAM, *Treasurer.*

Boston, April 12, 1864.

#### *Annual Report of the Librarian.*

In accordance with the rules of the Society, the Librarian submits the following as his Annual Report on the condition of the library of the Historical Society:—

During the past year, the accessions to the library have been numerous,—those from donors exceeding in number the receipts from similar sources during the preceding year; while, at the same time, a number exceeding that of former years has been received in the way of exchange and by actual purchase. The accessions received as gifts are as follows: Four hundred printed volumes, ten volumes of manuscripts, two hundred and sixteen miscellaneous manuscripts, seven bound and eight unbound volumes of newspapers, two hundred and two broadsides, twelve hundred and eleven pamphlets, eight maps, and seven plans. The accessions by exchange consist of one hundred and thirty-nine volumes and six pamphlets. The accessions by purchase are twenty-eight volumes. During the year, therefore, the accessions from all sources have been —

567 printed volumes,  
10 volumes of manuscripts,  
15 volumes of newspapers, and  
1,217 pamphlets.

A substitute has been received for the volume reported as missing at the last annual meeting; and another book, which has been missing for many years, has been replaced by exchange.

The most valuable donations to the library have been as follows: William Winthrop, Esq., United-States consul at Malta, has presented about two hundred volumes of historical and miscellaneous works, besides pamphlets; and notice has been received of two packages from the same donor, shipped for Boston. From William Appleton, Esq., has been received an interesting manuscript, "Journal de Castorland," and several valuable works on heraldry, and also fourteen pieces of ancient manuscripts, illustrative of the style of chirography at different periods of time. Clement H. Hill, Esq., has presented several volumes of Dodd's "British Peerage and Baronetage," and a large number of pamphlets. Several

volumes of the "Massachusetts Register," and a collection of pamphlets, have been received from Hon. William Minot. The Royal Academy of Sciences of Lisbon have presented eight volumes of its transactions. A collection of old newspapers and rare pamphlets has been received from John F. Eliot, Esq.; and several curious tracts from Rev. Charles Brooks. Henry A. Whitney, Esq., has presented a valuable collection of French tracts relating to the Rebellion, in excellent binding; and valuable donations have also been received from James Lenox, Esq., and Hon. Henry Wilson. The principal donations of pamphlets, besides those already mentioned, have been by the President (including a valuable collection from the Winthrop Papers), and from Charles E. Norton, Esq.

At the present time, the Society's library, consisting of nearly sixteen thousand volumes, and about thirteen thousand and five hundred unbound pamphlets, is well arranged in the several rooms appropriated to its use, as follows:—

In the Librarian's room.	295 volumes (including 61 duplicates).
In the middle room . . .	5,835 volumes.
In the upper hall . . .	3,579 volumes.
In the small upper room .	300 volumes of duplicates.
In the Dowse Library . .	4,650 volumes.
Newspapers . . . .	705 bound volumes.
Manuscripts . . . .	517 volumes.

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15,881

Unbound pamphlets, about . . 13,500

Duplicate pamphlets, about . . 5,000

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18,500

Of the unbound pamphlets, four thousand seven hundred and five are placed upon the floor in the small apartment over the Librarian's room, for want of suitable cases for containing them,—a fact which was made known in the last Annual Report. The duplicate pamphlets (amounting in num-

ber to about five thousand) are in the attic-story, and are not included in the count of thirteen thousand, which have been carefully arranged for use.

[After calling the attention of the Society to the want of more shelf-room for its increasing volumes, and the need of better accommodations for its portraits, and also suggesting the importance of connecting the upper hall with the middle room by a staircase, the report proceeds:—]

The ordinary duties of the library have been performed as usual; and little remains to be done to make the Society's collection of books the best arranged of any society-library in the country. In this connection, it seems to be the duty of the Librarian to call the attention of the Society to the fact, that, as yet, no book-plate has been prepared for the Dowse Library; which duty should be performed, and the Librarian authorized to insert copies in each volume of the collection. At the same time, the shelf and book numbers should be neatly affixed to each volume on the inside of the covers. This attention to the Dowse Library is not absolutely required for its use, but for the convenience of returning books to their proper places.

Although the circulation of books has been small for so large and valuable a collection of historical works, nevertheless the library has been used very considerably, both by its members and by visitors pursuing historical investigations. Its halls have been places of study, and its volumes of books and its rare pamphlets have been in frequent use, the character of the collection of works being more for consultation than for home-reading. To make the facilities of the library greater, and more in accordance with the objects of the establishment of the Society, a liberal appropriation should be made for the purchase of new historical books, and for supplying deficiencies in the different departments which the Society professes to include within its province. What books the Society already has are well arranged and thoroughly catalogued, and are very easily found when wanted; but the good arrangement and excellent catalogue

do not supply to the searcher what the library does not possess, and what it much wants,—a comparatively fair collection of books on any one historical subject. The most the library can do is to furnish what it has; yet it seems that a fair annual expenditure would fill many gaps, which a reliance on donations will never effect.

In closing this Report, the Librarian terminates his duties in connection with the library; and, while he thanks the Society for the indulgence he has received in the performance of his duties, he respectfully requests that his shortcomings may be soon forgotten, and not invidiously contrasted with the new energy which may be brought forth by his successor.

Respectfully submitted.

NATHANIEL B. SHURTLEFF, *Librarian*.

Boston, 14 April, 1864.

### *Annual Report on the Cabinet.*

In the continued absence of the Cabinet-keeper, the Assistant Librarian submits the following Report of the accessions to the cabinet, and of the present condition of that department.

The donations to the cabinet during the last year have not been numerous. Among those most worthy of notice may be mentioned photographic copies of the portraits of George and Martha Washington, from Stuart, colored in oil, and an engraved portrait of Sir Jeffrey Amherst, presented by the President of the Society; a medal, struck in 1859, in commemoration of Washington Irving, the gift of Francis C. Hoffman, Esq.; a fragment of pottery and a piece of iron from the ruins of Fort Charles, erected by Jean Ribault on Paris Island, S.C., presented by Edward L. Pierce, Esq.; two pieces of ancient Peruvian pottery, brought from South America by Commodore John Percival (United-States Navy),

the donation of Hon. Robert C. Winthrop; a *fac-simile* of the warrant for beheading Charles I., framed, and a photograph of St. Botolph's Church, Boston, Eng., the gift of William G. Brooks, Esq.; a fragment of Plymouth Rock, from the piece contributed to the Sanitary Fair, in Boston, by the Pilgrim Society, presented by George Livermore, Esq.; two photographs of the "Aspinwall Elm," in Brookline, taken before, and immediately after, its destruction, the gift of Samuel Masury, Esq.; a sword, said to have been used by the late General John Brooks in the war of the Revolution, presented by A. L. Rawson, Esq., of Syracuse, N.Y.; two cannon-balls and an iron scoop, dug up in grading the grounds around the monument on Breed's Hill, the donation of Amos A. Lawrence, Esq.; and a specimen of North-Carolina currency, issued in 1778, the gift of Mr. Horace P. Tuttle of the Forty-fourth Regiment Massachusetts Volunteers.

Among the memorials of the existing Rebellion, received during the year, may be noticed an interesting relic from the battle-field of Gettysburg, being the trunk of a white-oak tree, from the forest on Wolf Hill, riddled with musket-balls, the donation of D. McConaughy, Esq., of Gettysburg; an English Whitworth twelve-pound shot, fired from Rodman's Point, N.C., April 2, 1863, at the United-States gun-boat "Commodore Hull," — Captain W. G. Saltonstall, — presented by Amos A. Lawrence, Esq.; and bullets fired from Fort Wagner during the assault upon that work on the night of the 18th of July, 1863, given by Major John W. M. Appleton of the Fifty-fourth Regiment Massachusetts Volunteers.

The condition of the portraits belonging to the Society is nearly the same as at the last annual meeting.

The coins and medals contained in the cabinet have been examined, newly arranged in the case in which they have been kept for many years, and numbered in conformity with the catalogue. A series of coins of the sovereigns of England, from Elizabeth to George III., is placed in the glass

case for exhibition, together with the specimens of early American coinage.

By vote of the Standing Committee, the epaulets of Washington, the swords of Miles Standish and Captain Benjamin Church, of Colonel Prescott and Captain Linzee, with the coat worn by Franklin at the signing of the treaty of alliance with France, and the Bible formerly belonging to Isaac Allerton, were loaned to the managers of the Fair, for the benefit of the Sanitary Commission, held at the Music Hall, for exhibition; and were duly returned at the close of the fair.

JOHN APPLETON.

Library of the Mass. Hist. Society,  
April 14, 1864.

Dr. SHURTLEFF communicated a letter from T. William Wake Smart, M.D., Northiam, Staplehurst, Kent County, England, proposing to furnish to the Society, for publication, a series of extracts from manuscript letters of Rev. John Allin, Vicar of Rye. Referred to the Committee on publishing the Proceedings.

Dr. Shurtleff also presented, for reference to the same Committee, the following note to a paper, communicated by him at a previous meeting, on the maps of Boston:—

Since the preparation (in 1862) of the list of the printed maps of Boston, on pp. 37–40 of the last volume of Proceedings, several copperplate engravings of plans of the town have come to the writer's notice, of which a brief description, prepared in August last, follows:—

*London-Magazine Map:* In the "London Magazine" for April, 1744, is published, without naming the engraver, "A Chart of the Coast of New England, from Beverly to Scituate Harbor, including the Ports of Boston and Salem," the plate measuring 10 by 7½ inches. A neatly engraved "Plan of the Town of Boston" occupies one



corner of the plate, and measures 5 inches from the Fortification on the Neck to Winnisimmet Ferry-way, and about  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches in the extreme breadth of the town. Although the streets, as they were at the time of making the plan, are laid out on this map, a very few names of the topographical points of interest alone are noted on the plate.

*Gentleman's-Magazine Map*: A map  $10\frac{1}{2}$  by 8 inches, designated as "A New and Correct Plan of the Town of Boston," was published, without name of either author or engraver, in the "Gentleman's Magazine" for October, 1775. This map includes a portion of "Charlestown in ruins," and purports to have been "drawn upon the spot." It is remarkably well executed, and exhibits streets and topographical positions not on earlier plans of the town. In the January number of the magazine for the same year (1775) is a whole-sheet chart of the harbor of Boston, 14 by 12 inches, including a plan of the town made from an actual survey never before made public, and entitled "A Plan of the Town and Chart of the Harbor of Boston, exhibiting a View of the Islands, Castle, Forts, and Entrances into the said Harbor," and bears date Feb. 1, 1775. It includes Chelsea on the north, and Hingham on the south; and is chiefly valuable for the soundings, which are given with apparent precision.

*Almon's Map*: Published in the first volume of "Almon's Remembrancer," in 1775; size,  $10\frac{1}{4}$  by  $8\frac{1}{4}$  inches. This is a rudely drawn map of the environs of Boston, and is very inaccurate in its details. Except that it was drawn in June, 1775, and published in London, Aug. 28, 1775, and that it gives the headquarters, camps, and lines, together with the principal roads from Boston, it would be of very little value. It takes in a portion of Chelsea on the north, Hog Island on the east, Dorchester on the south, and Cambridge colleges on the west.

*Gazetteer Map*: Engraved in 1784 for the contemplated "Gazetteer of the Towns of Massachusetts," and published in the October number of the "Boston Magazine" for that year. It measures 9 by  $6\frac{1}{4}$  inches, and is a very creditable performance. It is styled "A New and Accurate Plan of the Town of Boston in New England," and, like the two preceding maps, gives to the Great Elm on the Common the name of "Liberty Tree." This map was re-engraved, in 1849, for an edition of the narrative of the Boston Massacre, and is interesting as containing some particulars not on other plans of the town.

The Committee of Nomination reported the following list of officers of the Society for the ensuing year:—

*President.*

HON. ROBERT C. WINTHROP, LL.D. . . . . BOSTON.

*Vice-Presidents.*

JARED SPARKS, LL.D. . . . . CAMBRIDGE.

COLONEL THOMAS ASPINWALL, A.M. . . . . BOSTON.

*Recording Secretary.*

CHARLES DEANE, A.M. . . . . CAMBRIDGE.

*Corresponding Secretary.*

REV. CHANDLER ROBBINS, D.D. . . . . BOSTON.

*Treasurer.*

HON. RICHARD FROTHINGHAM, A.M. . . . . CHARLESTOWN.

*Librarian.*

THOMAS C. AMORY, JUN., A.M. . . . . BOSTON.

*Cabinet-keeper.*

SAMUEL A. GREEN, M.D. . . . . BOSTON.

*Standing Committee.*

WILLIAM G. BROOKS, Esq. . . . . BOSTON.

REV. GEORGE E. ELLIS, D.D. . . . . CHARLESTOWN.

HORACE GRAY, JUN., A.M. . . . . BOSTON.

CHARLES E. NORTON, A.M. . . . . CAMBRIDGE.

REV. EDWARD E. HALE, A.M. . . . . BOSTON.

The above-named gentlemen were unanimously elected.

Mr. ELLIS offered the following vote, which was unanimously adopted; viz.:—

*Voted*, That the Society regret to learn that Joseph Willard, Esq., Corresponding Secretary of the Society, has been compelled by feeble health to decline being a candidate for re-election; and that their thanks be given to him for the acceptable manner in which he has for seven years performed the duties of his office.

The thanks of the Society were also voted to Dr.

Chandler Robbins for his numerous and valuable services as Recording Secretary during a period of seven years ; to the Hon. Emory Washburn, Chairman of the Standing Committee, and his retiring associates, and to Dr. N. B. Shurtleff, the Librarian for the past two years, for their careful attention to the interests of the Society.

On motion of Mr. LIVERMORE, it was *voted*, That the Standing Committee be requested to make arrangements for the preparation of an historical paper, to be communicated at each stated meeting, by one of the members of the Society.

The President then called the attention of the Society to the Third Centennial Anniversary of the birthday of Shakspeare ; remarking as follows : —

You will hardly need to be reminded, gentlemen, that we are now within a few days of the great Tercentenary commemoration of the birthday of Shakspeare ; and, though our Society has made no arrangements for any formal observance of the day, we can none of us be insensible to the interest of the occasion.

It is eminently appropriate that the principal celebration of the event should take place in the land and on the spot where it occurred ; and we shall all look eagerly for the report of what shall be said and done at Stratford-upon-Avon on the successive days which have been designated for the commemoration. Our own land, unhappily, is hardly in a condition for engaging in the festivities of such an anniversary with all the zeal and heartiness it is so well calculated to excite. Yet we all feel that it might well become us to take a part in the jubilee. We all feel, that, as the descendants of English ancestors who were contemporary with Shakspeare, we have a full share both in the large inheritance of his fame, and in the world's great debt to his memory.

We do not forget that he had finished his marvellous work, and gone to his rest, four years before the Pilgrim Fathers landed at Plymouth Rock; fourteen years before the Massachusetts Company embarked at Southampton.

We do not forget that it was the wreck of Sir George Somers in the Bermudas in 1609, when on his way to Virginia for the re-enforcement of an American colony, which is said to have suggested the scene and some of the most striking incidents for that one of his dramas which stands first in his printed volumes, and which, for the sublimity of its conceptions and the exquisite beauty of its language, is second to nothing which he ever wrote.

It is interesting to us to remember, too, that the same Earl of Southampton who was Shakspeare's earliest patron and especial friend, and to whom he dedicated his first poem, was among the earliest friends of New-England colonization; and that to the influence of his son, then Lord Treasurer of England, some of the most valuable privileges of at least one of our New-England charters were afterwards ascribed.\*

But, above all, we cannot forget the inexhaustible wealth which Shakspeare has contributed to that English literature, which, down to the period of our National Independence, certainly, we have a right to speak of as our literature, and to that English language, which, thank Heaven, is ours, and will be ours for ever.

Nor can we fail, as an Historical Society, to remember Shakspeare as an historian, as well as a dramatist and a poet. The original title of his collected works, as published successively in 1623, 1632, 1664, and 1685, was, "Mr. William Shakspeare's Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies." And what historian has ever done so much as he to give life and individuality to the great characters which he portrays, or to

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\* See Sir H. Ashhurst's Dedication to the Lady Rachel Russell of Cotton Mather's Funeral Sermon on Governor Fitz John Winthrop, as reprinted in London, 1710.

make the events which he describes familiar as household words for ever? It may be that he was not always exact in following the old chronicles of Holinshed, or that he may have sometimes indulged a poetic license in dressing his figures for the stage. Yet no one will doubt that the common mind of the last two centuries has owed its most vivid impressions — I had almost said its only impressions — of the Richards and the Henrys, of Macbeth, King Lear, and King John, — to say nothing of Julius Cæsar and Mark Antony, — to the historical dramas of Shakspeare.

Unhappily, he that has given us so many grand delineations of others has left but few records of himself. Even the day of his birth, which is about to be celebrated, is but a matter of inference: it is only known, certainly, as the day of his death. We know the date of his baptism and of his funeral. We know where he was born, and where he was buried. We know that he married Anne Hathaway, and had three children. We know that he went to London, wrote plays, and helped to perform them at the "Globe" and the "Blackfryers." We know that he returned to Stratford-upon-Avon; made a will, "commending his soul into the hands of God his Creator, hoping and assuredly believing, through the only merits of Jesus Christ his Saviour, to be made partaker of life everlasting;" and soon afterwards died at fifty-two years of age.

Almost every thing else is inference, conjecture, uncertain tradition. And so it happens that we know least of him, of whom we should all desire to know most. Not one familiar letter; not one authentic conversation; hardly a domestic incident; only three or four known autographs, and those but signatures; not a scrap of his original manuscripts, a single line of which would outsell the collected autographs of all the monarchs of the world, — not a scrap of those priceless manuscripts, though the players must have had them all, when they said, in their preface to the first edition of his works, that "his mind and hand went together; and that what he

thought, he uttered with that easiness, that we have scarce received from him a blot in his papers."

And this brings before us a fact most important to his character. We know that so insensible was he to the worth of his own writings, or so indifferent to their fate, that he never collected or revised them for publication; and that it was seven years after his death before they entered upon that world-wide career of immortality which the press and the stage, the art and the literature, of almost every land beneath the sun, have since united to secure for them, and which they seem destined to enjoy, generation after generation, age after age, above all other writings, except the Holy Scriptures.

Nor would we willingly forget that the only epithets coupled with his name by his contemporaries and friends were "our gentle Shakspeare," "our worthy Shakspeare," "our beloved Shakspeare."

But it is not my purpose, gentlemen, even were it in my power, to anticipate the eloquent eulogies which will be pronounced on the great English dramatist, at home and abroad, during the approaching commemoration-week. I only designed, by these few remarks, to prepare the way for the following resolution, which your Standing Committee have authorized me to submit for your adoption:—

*Resolved* by the Massachusetts Historical Society, That, in view of the near approach of the Tercentenary commemoration of the birthday of SHAKSPEARE, we gladly avail ourselves of the opportunity afforded us by this, our seventy-third Annual Meeting, to enter upon our records an expression of our profound reverence for the genius of that marvellous man; of our gratitude to God for the matchless gifts with which he was endowed for the instruction and delight of mankind; of our deep sense of the inexhaustible riches which his writings have added to the literature and the language which were the birthright of our fathers, and which are ours by inheritance; and of our hearty sympathy with all those, whether in Old England, in our own country, or in any other part of the world, who shall unite in celebrating so memorable a nativity.